

Upper Darby, PA - Today at the Upper Darby Welcome Center, Congressman Joe Sestak (PA-07) presented a check in the amount of \$352,500—which he secured from the federal government during the FY 2008 appropriations process—to the Upper Darby to launch its Center For Family Safety (CFS). The CFS is designed to provide education and support services for families—in particular women and children—who find their safety at risk due to domestic violence. Services would include temporary shelter, language assistance and access to legal services. — “I am so pleased to present these funds to Upper Darby’s Center for Family Safety,” said Congressman Sestak. “We must address the issue of domestic violence in our communities, and I applaud the community for reaching out and taking the steps to do so.”

The Congressman began work on this important project last year when he met privately with a local minister as well as a group of women who had been in abusive domestic situations. These women asked the Congressman for help, as they were concerned that there was not sufficient, safe local shelter space for families who had suffered abuse. While the Congressman worked locally by speaking with the Domestic Abuse Project of Delaware County to increase shelter space, he simultaneously fought to secure an appropriation through the federal government for this shelter space. To that end, the Congressman successfully \$352,500 dollars during the appropriations process and is continuing to work with the Domestic Abuse Project in an effort to secure assistance for similar shelters.

The Congressman secured the funds for the Center for Family Safety by directing them through the Weed & Seed program, which is a Department of Justice Program initiative that aims to prevent, control and reduce violent crime, drug abuse and gang activity in high-crime neighborhoods. Law enforcement agencies and prosecutors “weed” out criminals while public agencies and community-based private organizations partner to “seed” the human services that are critical to combating the root causes of criminal behavior. The CFS will be one of these “seeding” organizations in the Upper Darby community.

Congressman Sestak spoke recently about the importance of the Weed & Seed program at the 7th Congressional District Antiviolence Summit this February. The Congressman was focused on the summit since he took office, and has made frequent visits to churches, synagogues, mosques, and other local communities of faith to gather their opinions and counsel on issues of utmost importance, particularly local violence.

The summit featured panel discussions by local experts, law enforcement officers, religious leaders and elected officials who discussed the role of violence in our community and how

various interfaith and community organizations can partner with elected officials to reduce it.

At that summit, he also noted that there has been a 30- percent overall rise in criminal cases in Delaware County Courts, and that according to the State Police's Uniform Crime Reporting System, in the past two years there has been a 37.5 percent increased in aggravated assault in the county.

Congressmen Sestak noted that to combat this rising violence, we require laws and programs that protect victims, ensure that perpetrators are prosecuted, and address the root causes of criminal behavior. To that end, he has supported programs and legislation such as the Violence Against Women Act, which the Congressman voted to fully fund with \$320 million for lifesaving programs to end sexual and domestic abuse. The Congressman is also a proponent of the COPS (Community Oriented Policing Services) Program, which, since its foundation, has provided \$11.3 billion in assistance to state and local law enforcement agencies in hiring additional police officers.

He further noted that the root causes of violent behavior can range from lack of educational opportunities to joblessness. He has fought in Congress to pass legislation that aims to foster a society where opportunities are available to all who seek them. For instance, he recently voted for the Health and Human Services and Education Appropriation Bill that allowed me to secure \$150,000 for the Community Partnership for Job Readiness Program, which will provide workforce development services in the local municipalities of Trainer, Marcus Hook and Upper Darby. It also provides a \$43 million increase for Job Corps, a program that provides job training and placement for at-risk youth. The bill rejects the President's proposal to eliminate the vital \$630 million Community Development Block Grant, which local communities use to help low-income families get on their feet. On the education front, the legislation designates \$150,000 for Widener University's Early Childhood Engagement Project, which will be used to improve access to and quality of programs for 3-4 year old children. And for those young adults with the most financial need, the bill addresses college affordability by raising the funding level of Pell Grants.

After the ceremony at the Upper Darby Weed & Seed Headquarters, the Congressman toured The Center Foundation in Media. The foundation, launched in 1994, is one of the only adult mentoring groups whose services are offered free of charge. The Center Foundation is home to mentoring programs that support adult women dealing with difficult transitions, including divorce or abuse.

Born and raised in Delaware County, former 3-star Admiral Joe Sestak served in the Navy for 31 years and now serves as the Representative from the 7th District of Pennsylvania. He led a series of operational commands at sea, including Commander of an aircraft carrier battle group of 30 U.S. and allied ships with over 15,000 sailors and 100 aircraft that conducted operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. After 9/11, Joe was the first Director of "Deep Blue," the Navy's anti-terrorism unit that established strategic and operations policies for the "Global War on Terrorism." He served as President Clinton's Director for Defense Policy at the National Security Council in the White House, and holds a Ph.D. in Political Economy and Government from Harvard University. According to the office of the House Historian, Joe is the highest-ranking former military officer ever elected to the U.S. Congress.